

Minehead withstand second half barrage

TRAILING 1-0 to a goal in the dying seconds of the first half, Wycombe Wanderers threw all they had at Minehead in the F.A. Cup first round on Saturday.

Dominating the second half completely they battered away for the whole of the second half coming within inches of pulling back that vital goal which might have kept them in the Cup. Then Minehead struck with a 90th minute goal to put a totally false look on the scoreline.

But for all their pressure — and it was almost continuous — Wanderers paid the price of missing chances. That's what Saturday's game was all about. Minehead had about four and took two, Wycombe had a lot more but couldn't break through.

So Wanderers, who have built up a much revered reputation as F.A. Cup giant



By **STUART EARP**

Minehead 2,

Wycombe W. 0

killers after reaching the second round for the last six years, were ousted by Minehead of the Southern League. It was an inauspicious ending to their hopes, especially as they were exempt until the first round in view of their past F.A. Cup achievements.

Supporters — there were five coachloads and more at Irnham Road — must have wondered just how different it could have been had Mick Holifield played against a defence that allowed players time and room to turn and run at them, the situation was tailor-made for Mick's pace.

Manager John Reardon and physio Ken Read gave him a stiff test at Taunton F.C. on Saturday morning

and then decided against it, fearing further injury.

So Wanderers were without a key man and it soon showed. Despite a marvellous performance from Derek Harris — the Blues' best player — there was not enough punch up front and little or no support for Harris' superb running. Dylan Evans chose this of all days to have one of his worst games of the season while Howard Kennedy dwelled on the ball too long in his make-shift forward role.

In midfield Roger Day tried to slow the game down without making much impression and was eventually substituted. Graham Mackenzie had a fine game, especially in the second half when he had Wycombe's best chance of scoring.

The defensive performance

was mixed. Keith Mead was the pick of the back four but Alan Phillips had a poor game by his standards.

SHUT UP SHOP

What about Minehead? An unknown quantity before the tie, they showed they had a good set of forwards and a useful man to supply them in blond midfielder player Brian Durbin. They looked vulnerable at the back and unlike Isthmian League clubs, they allowed Wycombe plenty of time and space until they reached the penalty area. Then they shut up shop and always seemed to have an extra man whenever needed. Goalkeeper John Macey, who let in three goals when playing for Newport in the F.A. Cup at Loakes Park a few years back, was made to look a world beater by some poor Wanderers crosses but also made several excellent saves when it mattered.

Wanderers, wearing a new yellow strip, made all the early running and forced three corners in the first five minutes. Minehead took no chances, putting the ball behind at the slightest hint of danger. Evans hit the woodwork after four minutes but the flag was up for offside.

It was five minutes before Peter Spittle had his first touch of the ball but Minehead, whose pitch was wide and in excellent condition, slowly began to come into the game with Derek Bryant and Jim Jenkins prominent. The threat of 6ft. 4in. centre forward Andy Leitch was clearly seen after 10 minutes when he got up to head down Durbin's cross but Phillips and Spittle combined to block Jenkins' shot at the far post.

After a quiet spell of 15 minutes, Minehead suddenly burst into life when Tony Clausen's cross was nodded on by Bryant. Jenkins had a clear shooting chance from six yards but Spittle reacted brilliantly to get a hand to his shot and the defence cleared. Mackenzie and Mead replied at the other end while Spittle dived bravely at the feet of Jenkins to smother another chance.

Paul Birdseye cracked in a drive that Alan Impey turned over his own crossbar but Wycombe's best effort came from Harris when he ran to meet Kennedy's 40th minute free kick but saw Macey hold a well placed header. Wanderers, it seemed, had done enough in the first half when Minehead suddenly broke through with the time just on 45 minutes. Day lost the ball in midfield and Jenkins' flick found the supporting Bobby Brown. Phillips came racing across to challenge but mistimed his run. Brown was just inside the box and then cut in and placed a low shot perfectly past the advancing Spittle into the corner.

TELLING BLOW

It was a telling blow for the Blues and there was more concern in the first five minutes after the break. Forcing two corners Minehead might easily have sewn the game up when Bryant's shot was deflected over and then the same player thumped another shot straight at Mackenzie.

Then the tide turned. Wanderers took a grip in midfield and began to pressurise the Minehead defence more and more. Evans put Birdseye through with Minehead for once short of cover but Harris took too long in shooting and Macey saved his attempted chip. Then Day played a 1-2 with Harris on the edge of the box but miss-hit his shot, which nevertheless troubled Macey.

Steve Carter, who brought a premature end to many Wanderers attacks, almost put through his own goal from Kennedy's near post cross, the ball skidding inches past an upright.

There was little else Wanderers could do. With Farouk Quraishi and Mackenzie supporting well, they kept powering forward only to see their raids cut out by the massed Minehead defences. More attacks and more half chances came when Evans drove over the top and Birdseye volleyed just wide.

But Wanderers best chance came with five minutes left. Evans took a quick free kick to substitute Tony Horseman, who did brilliantly to turn over a cross. It found Mackenzie at the far post unmarked for a crucial second. 'Jock' struck for goal and Minehead were heading for a replay at Loakes Park until Macey dived across to push the ball away for another corner — Wycombe's 14th and last of the match.

It was a crucial moment in the game. A goal then and Minehead would probably not have scored their bonus goal in the last minute when Leitch, who had been marked out of the game, kept up a remarkable record of F.A. Cup goalscoring. He soared above the defence to Brown's free kick and beat Spittle's attempted punch to head firmly into the net. It was his sixth goal in as many F.A. Cup games and it put the lid on Minehead's victory.

With more luck and a better run of the ball Wanderers would have taken them to a replay which I felt they deserved after their ceaseless second half barrage. But it was not to be and for the first time for five years, Wycombe's name will not appear in the second round.

MINEHEAD: J. Macey; A. Impey, S. Carter, R. Boyd, A. Clausen; R. Brown, B. Durbin, C. Freeman; D. Bryant, A. Leitch, J. Jenkins. Sub: M. Mead (not used).

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies; G. Mackenzie, R. Day (sub. A. Horseman 79 mins.), F. Quraishi; H. Kennedy, D. Harris, D. Evans.

Half-time: 1-0. **Goalscorers:** Brown (45), Leitch (90). **Referee:** D. Biddle (Bristol). **Attendance:** 1,400.

Blues friendly

WYCOMBE Wanderers have arranged a friendly tonight (Tuesday) against Loughborough College at Loakes Park (7.30 pm).

The College team, who have supplied several players to Wycombe over the years, have lost only twice in 12 matches this season. Their team is: R. Jones, S. Ennals, G. Haymen, R. Wyatt, W. Carpenter, J. Batley, A. Kirkup, B. Griffiths, G. Dawtry, S. Long, D. Ross, P. Tindale.

Wanderers will be keen to get Saturday's FA Cup defeat out of their systems in preparation for this week's home Isthmian League local derby against improving Slough Town.

WYCOMBE Youth are out for revenge tomorrow (Wednesday) at Loakes Park when they meet Hendon. In their first match in the Berger Paints Isthmian Youth

Cup, Wycombe crashed 6-0 at Hendon but since then they have picked up considerably, beating Wokingham last week 3-0.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION (Up to and inc 28/11/77)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	22	17	4	1	52	15	55
Wycombe	22	16	2	5	40	21	47
Hitchin	23	13	5	5	40	25	44
Leatherhead	22	12	6	4	43	20	42
Tooting	22	12	5	5	33	22	41
Dagenham	25	12	4	9	45	37	40
Staines	23	10	7	6	28	32	37
Croydon	22	11	3	8	35	30	36
Hendon	25	10	5	10	33	33	35
Hayes	22	9	5	8	26	26	32
Sutton	22	9	5	8	25	31	32
Carshalton	22	8	6	8	37	33	30
Barking	21	8	2	11	33	34	26
Wittamow	18	7	5	6	25	26	26
Boreham W	17	7	3	7	23	28	24
Slough	21	7	3	11	29	37	24
Woking	20	6	1	13	30	38	19
Southall	21	4	6	11	20	38	18
Kingstonian	22	4	5	13	21	34	17
Leytonstone	22	3	8	11	24	38	17
Tilbury	19	3	6	10	25	36	15
Storrford	23	1	6	16	21	54	9